



DAVID L. BOREN

COLLEGE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA



September 30, 2021

Dear OU Community,

The United States has always been a country of immigrants. For hundreds of years, successive waves of migrants, driven by some combination of compulsion, misfortune elsewhere and/or the lure of opportunity, have arrived in this country and shaped every aspect of its history and identity.

This week, Oklahoma, along with several other states, saw the first arrivals of Afghans fleeing chaos in the aftermath of the Taliban's takeover of their country. Some 1,000 Afghans are expected to be initially housed in the Oklahoma City area, and another 800 in Tulsa. Oklahoma is slated to receive the third-highest contingent of Afghans across the country, after California and Texas.

We at OU stand with our new Afghan neighbors, welcoming them to the mosaic of cultures, religions and racial and ethnic groups that make up our state. The scale of the resettlement and the challenge of successful integration will require the contribution of every segment of our government and society. At OU, we are ready to do our part. Our students are already rallying to the challenge, gathering toys for children and organizing a reception, among other community-based efforts. The university looks forward to providing English instruction, interpretation services, and advice on careers, according to the evolving needs. We will partner with the many citizens and institutions of our state to make this inordinately challenging time for the new arrivals as smooth and successful as possible.

In addition to assisting in the refugee resettlement effort, we have launched a parallel initiative. It is to bring several dislocated or at-risk Afghan scholars to OU over the next year to promote the exchange of ideas, research, and teaching. This initiative draws on a generous donation and co-funding from multiple colleges across OU. We will update the community when the first scholars arrive. When they do, we trust that our campus community will be a microcosm of what the broader effort in the state should be: inclusive, civil, and based on the enlightened self-interest that comes from seeing ourselves in others, and others in ourselves. *E pluribus unum.*

If you have interest in supporting the resettlement effort at OU or elsewhere in Oklahoma, please contact me at sfritzen@ou.edu.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SFritzen'.

Scott Fritzen
Dean, David L. Boren College of International Studies
Chair, OU International Student Task Force